

# **MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES REPORT ON DEPARTMENT AIRCRAFT FISCAL YEAR 2010-11**

**Sec. 710 of 2011 PA 63:** The Department shall provide a report on the wildfire protection use of Department aircraft to the House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees on Natural Resources and the House and Senate Fiscal Agencies by December 1, 2011. The report shall include the following information for the preceding fiscal year:

1. How many airplanes the Department owns: The Department owns a total of seven aircraft. All seven aircraft are single-engine (six are high-wing Cessnas, and one is a low-wing Beechcraft A-36 Bonanza).

2. How much the airplanes cost annually: The cost to operate the Department aircraft for Fiscal Year 2011 was \$173,127.61. This amount included all fuel, insurance, and maintenance. The Department also replaced three aircraft engines (required every 2,000 flight hours) at an additional cost of \$110,839.98, and added one collision avoidance system at an additional cost of \$11,875.00.

3. Which DNR divisions used the aircraft throughout the year:

- Forest Management Division – Used aircraft for wildfire detection and suppression support, as well as forest health surveys and Commercial Forest Act enforcement
- Wildlife Division – Used aircraft for moose surveys, wolf surveys, bald eagle surveys, waterfowl surveys, and predator/prey surveys
- Law Enforcement Division – Used aircraft to monitor for illegal deer feeding and deer shining

4. How many wildfires occurred in which the aircraft were used to help provide detection, surveillance, or suppression support: Favorable weather led to lower wildfire numbers this past year. Even with the favorable weather, the Department took action against 197 wildfires that required aircraft assistance. Twenty-nine of these fires were difficult to locate fires caused by lightning. A total of 935 acres were destroyed by these particular fires, one of which required the evacuation of local residents.

5. How many flight hours were logged for the fleet in Fiscal Year 2011: The fleet logged a total of 2,429.3 hours.